

Close Reading Strategy with Mark Twain, “The Glorious Whitewasher” – Grade 7

ELP Standards:

IV-R4: BI-HI-14: drawing conclusions from information implied or inferred in a literary selection.

IV-R4: LI-14: describing the characteristics of the minor and major characters within a fictional text.

IV-R4: HI-14: analyzing the motivations of the minor and major characters within a fictional text.

Text Under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions for Students
Entire Text	<p>First Read: Introduce the text and students read independently Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text, and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Twain’s text. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Twain’s prose without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.</p> <p>MODIFICATION: Text may be read aloud for low language proficiencies or students with decoding deficiencies.</p> <p>Second Read: Read the text out loud as students follow along Asking students to listen to Twain’s “Whitewashing The Fence” exposes students a second time to the rhythms and meaning of his language before they begin their own close reading of the text. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow the shape of Twain’s story, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.</p>

Text Under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions for Students
<p>But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his <u>straitened</u> means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.</p>	<p>First Discussion: Partner Talk (Teacher Listens In) (Q1) Describe Tom and how he is feeling. Tom Sawyer is a high-spirited boy who was looking forward to a fun day he had planned, but unfortunately he has to work. This realization “burnt him like fire,” and he contemplates trying to buy his way out of his labors, only to realize that he doesn’t possess the financial wherewithal to do so—driving him further into a “dark and hopeless” mood.</p> <p>MODIFICATION: Purposeful partnering will allow students to engage with text on a meaningful level and “set the stage” for differentiation for low language proficiencies.</p> <p>Second Discussion: Share Out “What were you or your partner talking about?” Observe level of engagement, judge level of students’ understanding of the reading. Are there misconceptions? (Q1) Describe Tom and how he is feeling. Tom Sawyer is a high-spirited boy who was looking forward to a fun day he had planned, but unfortunately he has to work. This realization “burnt him like fire,” and he contemplates trying to buy his way out of his labors, only to realize that he doesn’t possess the financial wherewithal to do so—driving him further into a “dark and hopeless” mood.</p> <p>MODIFICATION: Develop a graphic organizer or class text to record and track student responses as you move through the questions.</p>

Text Under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions for Students
<p>He took up his brush and went <u>tranquilly</u> to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was <u>personating</u> a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:</p>	<p>DISCUSSION & TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS As students move through these questions, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions may focus on academic vocabulary.</p> <p>Third Read: Read From the Second ¶ to the End of the Selection Direct students to listen for and annotate the words or portions of text that illustrate the mood of each character.</p> <p>MODIFICATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify that in this selection we are focusing on the mood of the character and not the mood of the overall selection. Define and provide an anchor chart to support students as they annotate. - If students are unfamiliar with a steamboat, teachers can show them the following video of a modern-day steamboat on the Mississippi River: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDYSdoYEna0 <p>Third Discussion: Group Work (Groups of 3) Direct students to:</p>

<p>“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. “Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling- ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.</p> <p>“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow- wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles— for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.</p> <p>“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow- chow!” The left hand began to describe circles. “Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).”</p> <p>Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention t o the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-YI! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you?”</p> <p>No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, and then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.</p> <p>Ben said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”</p> <p>Tom wheeled suddenly and said: “Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the question 2. Act out the passage—one as Tom, one as Ben, and one as the narrator. 3. Discuss the question 4. Answer the question and record their answer <p>(Q2) Why was Ben Rogers whooping melodiously? What is occurring in this selection?</p> <p><i>Unlike Tom, Ben’s “heart was light” in anticipation of the fun he would have this day. His carefree attitude is reflected in his impersonation of a steamboat, captain, and even the bells of the engine.</i></p> <p>Asking students to act out this portion of the text engages them in the sights and sounds of Twain’s world and makes them deliberately engage the text. Students should be given wide latitude to interpret both the tone of the dialogue, as well as staging the action. Teachers should circulate to check for comprehension and, if time permits, ask particularly creative groups to present all or a portion of the text to the entire class.</p> <p>Journal Writing: Provide students with the following questions and direct them to draft a response citing specific evidence from the text.</p> <p>(Q3) Why is Ben moving his arms and his hands in the manner he is?</p> <p><i>This is a logical question to ask as a follow up to the earlier reading and re-enactment of the scene, capturing the manner in which he is imitating a paddlewheel and motion of the steamboat.</i></p> <p>(Q4) Is Tom’s surprise genuine?</p> <p><i>This is a good question to ask to determine close reading comprehension. There is ample evidence that Tom is well aware of Ben’s presence (“paid no attention to the steamboat”; “Tom’s mouth watered for the apple”) but is feigning surprise (“Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing”).</i></p> <p>MODIFCATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Frames - Word Banks - 1 Question
--	---

The Text: Twain, Mark. “Whitewashing the Fence” from *Tom Sawyer*

But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his **sorrows multiplied**. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious **expeditions**, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his **worldly wealth** and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an **inspiration** burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, **magnificent** inspiration.

He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight **presently**—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his **anticipations** high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, **melodious whoop**, at **intervals**, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he **slackened** speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to **ponderously** and with **laborious pomp and circumstance**—for he was **personating** the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and **executing** them:

“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. “Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.

“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow- wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing **stately circles**—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.

“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow- chow!” The left hand began to describe circles. “Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that **stage**, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).”

Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-YI! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you?”

No answer. Tom **surveyed** his last touch with the eye of an artist, and then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben **ranged** up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.

Ben said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”

Tom **wheeled** suddenly and said: “Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”